

OUTCOME

GOAL 3.3 - SUPPORT A GREATER BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY

Overview

With the dramatic shift of women from households to workplaces, the hours American families spend working in paid jobs, and not at home, have increased dramatically. The patterns of women's work lives now more closely resemble those of men's. Women are less likely to drop out of the labor force for significant periods of their lives, and more and more women are responsible, alone or with a spouse, for the economic security of their families.

In March of 1999, more than 15.2 million American families had children under the age of 6. Quality child care services and job flexibility are paramount to balance the work and family responsibilities of two-thirds of these families who rely upon the earnings of a working single parent or two employed parents. The Department of Labor is dedicated to increasing access to affordable, quality child care and promoting initiatives that improve workers' ability to carry out their job responsibilities without sacrificing their commitment to their dependents.

Serving the Public

In the Department of Labor, the Women's Bureau and the Employment and Training Administration work in tandem to promote programs that help Americans to balance work and family life. DOL has implemented a national initiative to develop a cadre of professional child care specialists, enhance a system for training and certifying child care providers, and assist in the development of a voluntary set of nationally recognized skills standards. The Department has also worked to assist employers to become more responsive to their employees' child care needs, including surveying the concerns of working women and establishing a clearinghouse that offers employers customized assistance on the best policies for responding to the dependent care needs of employees.

The DOL's Business-to-Business Mentoring on Child Care initiative, begun in 1998, has proven to be a novel approach for expanding the availability of child care and family-friendly workplace policies. The pilot project encouraged businesses that had established child care and family-friendly policies for their workers to serve as mentors, pairing these model employers with other businesses seeking guidance and direction in establishing similar programs.

Challenges

Strengthening child care for working parents is aided by all levels of government working together with businesses, experts, advocates, child care providers and parents. Identifying innovative approaches, publicizing information about the best child care programs and practices, and maximizing resources through private and public partnerships also play a role in assuring parents that their children are receiving the care they need to learn and grow into healthy, able young adults.

PROVIDE SAFE, QUALITY CHILD CARE

Goal 3.3A: By replicating the West Virginia and other successful child care models, increase the number of States with child care apprenticeship programs to 39 and increase the number of new child care apprentices registered by 15 percent over the FY 1999 results (to at least 232).

Results: This goal was fully achieved. States with child care apprenticeship programs increased from 29 to 39. The number of newly registered child care apprentices increased from 202 in FY 1999 to 700 in FY 2000, significantly exceeding the targeted 15 percent increase.

Program Description: The Quality Child Care Initiative addresses the need to provide working families with safe, affordable, quality child care and an adequate supply of competent, professional child care providers. This initiative is part of an upgrading effort currently taking place in the child care industry. Technical assistance is provided to the States to develop Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship programs and support a life-long career track for specialists to be employed at a child care center and/or become child care provider entrepreneurs.

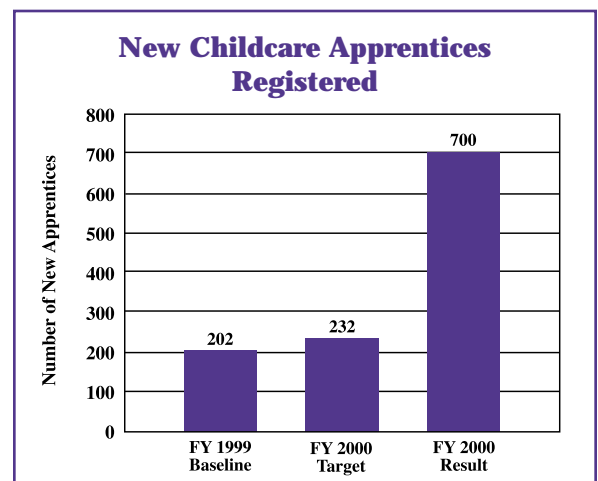
Analysis of Results: In FY 2000, ten additional States were awarded child care grants totaling \$3.5 million. Two years ago, the Department launched an aggressive grassroots outreach campaign that laid the groundwork for the current success of the Child Care Project. One activity, a live and interactive televised Child Care Forum broadcast by satellite and transmitted to multi-regional

locations, was attended by representatives from Federal and State agencies, child care associations, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, employer and labor associations, and community-based organizations. The success of the Forum contributed to this exceptional outcome in new child care registrants.

Strategies: In order to successfully meet the goals of the Quality Child Care Initiative, DOL utilized numerous strategies. These include:

- Facilitating the development of States' consortia of representatives from the child care industry and government entities;
- Establishing and maintaining working relationships with the consortia;
- Providing consultation and technical assistance in the development, maintenance and expansion of child care programs in all States;
- Initiating cross-cutting workforce development efforts with other Federal entities and national apprenticeship stakeholders.

Goal Assessment: Despite the extent to which FY 2000 performance exceeded the target for this goal, the Department does not plan to raise the 20 percent increase in new child



care apprentices targeted for FY 2001, because fewer new child care apprentice registrants are expected in future years. The Quality Child Care Initiative is now established in 39 States. Since many of the new apprentices were registered as a result of adding new States and expanding the base of the program, the opportunity for increasing participation through further expansion is limited. While some continuing increase is expected, the number of new apprentices added in FY 2001 will be at a much lower rate than the 247 percent increase in new apprentices experienced in FY 2000. The child care apprenticeship programs are ripe for outcome oriented goals focused on such areas as the impact of the program on the participants' earnings. ■

SUPPORT A GREATER BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY

Goal 3.3B: 20 percent of the 420 employers enrolled in the Business-to-Business Mentoring on Child Care (BtB) initiative will implement family-friendly policies and programs for their employees and families.

Results: This goal was exceeded. Family-friendly policies were implemented for the employees of 119 or 28 percent of the businesses enrolled in the program.

Program Description: DOL's Women's Bureau conducted the Business-to-Business Mentoring on Child Care initiative to encourage businesses with established child care and work/family programs to serve as mentors to other businesses seeking guidance and direction in establishing similar programs.

Analysis of Results: An estimated 2 million private sector employees have

new opportunities for balancing their work and family responsibilities as a result of the programs now being offered by 119 of the businesses which participated in this pilot project.

Approximately 32 employers implemented or expanded on/off-site day care centers and related programs. Some of the workplace initiatives are quite unique due either to the industry or the program concept. As an example, a hotel opened a new, on-site, 24-hours-per-day, seven-days-per-week, child care facility for 250 children. A distinctly different initiative undertaken under the Mentoring Initiative was the implementation of an on/near-site inter-generational day center for elder care and child care. In-home emergency elder care services and subsidies for child care are offered as part of the center's program. Overall, most of the day care centers offer a wide range of programs such as back-up child care, sick care and before- and after-school programs.

Jeanie runs a child care center called *Kids in Motion II*. It exists because a group of Montana state employees decided they needed a cost-effective, accessible facility. They signed up with the DOL Women's Bureau, which sponsored a business-to-business child-care program. A large company in Louisville, Colorado, agreed to be their mentor and provided them with advice and information. In September 2000, *Kids in Motion II* opened its doors with an enrollment of nearly 40 children. The center is near the worksite of the state employees, allowing parents to drop off their children and then walk to work. One mother found an added benefit to working so close to her child: "I feel very lucky that I am able to nurse my baby during my lunch hour."

Photo by: Frances Jefferson



Other major categories of programs now being offered as a result of the initiative include: flexible work schedules to allow employees to take compensated/uncompensated leave when they experience family problems; lactation rooms; child care/elder care resource and referral services; employee assistance programs; paid parental and adoption leave for employees, including fathers; telecommuting programs; wellness programs; assistance in finding suitable child care; balancing work and family seminars; reimbursements to employees for the cost of utilizing licensed backup child care when regular arrangements fall through and reimbursement for child care expenses.

These new family-friendly programs are the culmination of an extensive

four-phase initiative -- pre-implementation planning, employer enrollment, matching employers with business mentors, and effective implementation by employers. In FY 1999, the goal to increase by 420 the number of new employers who implement family-

friendly policies and programs, was not met. The goal was revised for FY 2000 based on a more realistic expectation -- to have 20 percent of the 420 enrolled employers implement a program. The results of this program are supported by reports from the businesses that instituted new or expanded family-friendly policies and/or programs in their workplaces, including the type of

program and the number of employees impacted.

Strategies: DOL, through its ten regional offices, promoted the project and worked directly with public and private sector organizations to pair employers with model programs with businesses seeking to offer similar benefits to their employees. Initiatives included workshops, presentations at business fairs, contacts with local government officials, and co-sponsoring events with Chambers of Commerce and other business consortia.

Goal Assessment: This pilot project concluded in September 2000. ■

